

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
For the
**Douglas, Arizona Wastewater Collection and
Potable Water Distribution Improvement Project**

PROJECT LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is considering authorizing the award of a Border Environment Infrastructure Fund (BEIF) grant to the City of Douglas to participate in proposed wastewater and potable water infrastructure improvements. These improvements involve the rehabilitation and expansion of wastewater and potable water pipelines within the City of Douglas. In addition, wastewater and/or potable water services will be extended to the Pirtleville, Bay Acres, and Fairview *colonias* outside of the City of Douglas with the construction of new sewer mains, laterals, trunklines, water lines, and transmission mains*.

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

Currently, the Douglas wastewater collection system and the potable water distribution system have deficiencies that cause public health concerns. In the collection system, broken sewer lines overflow polluting the soil or allow precipitation inflow which causes overloading of the wastewater treatment plant. Inadequate pressure in the potable water distribution system can lead to bacteria and algae growth in the distribution lines and unacceptably low chlorine residuals at the far ends of the system.

Water in the *colonias* is supplied by individual wells and wastewater is treated through septic systems. Many septic systems are faulty and poorly maintained resulting in the discharge of untreated sewage to surrounding soil and exposing residents to pollution. Further, faulty septic systems in close proximity to domestic water supply wells could potentially contaminate water supplies.

The proposed project would address the existing deficiencies of the Douglas wastewater and potable water systems. It would extend municipal wastewater and water service to the *colonias*, replacing the domestic systems. It would also meet projected wastewater and water demands.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES AND CONDITIONS

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act, EPA has prepared an environmental assessment (EA) that examines the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project in the U.S., as well as the transboundary impacts that might occur in Mexico. After considering a wide range of regulatory, environmental (both natural and human) and socio-economic factors, the EA did not identify any significant impacts to the environment that would result from the implementation of this project.

PUBLIC REVIEW

The EA is on file, along with other project materials, and is available for public inspection at the EPA Region 9 office in San Francisco, California. Copies of the EA are also available for public review at the Douglas City Hall, Administration Department, located at 425 10th E. Street and also available at the Douglas Public Library, 560 E. 10th Street. Please contact Connie Martinez

at Douglas City Hall at 520-364-1586. In addition, the EA will be posted on the Border Environment Cooperation Commission (BECC) website at <http://www.cocef.org>.

To obtain additional information about the project, please contact Evelyn Wachtel by email at: wachtel.evelyn@epa.gov or by calling (415) 744-1167.

Interested persons, including those who disagree with this proposal, may submit comments to EPA Region 9 within 30 calendar days from the date this document is issued. No administrative action will be taken on this proposed project prior to the expiration of this comment period, which ends May 21, 2001. Comments, via letter, fax or email, should be sent to Evelyn Wachtel at the address listed below.

Evelyn Wachtel (WTR-4)
U.S. EPA, Region 9
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA. 94105
Telephone: (415) 744-1167
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After EPA assesses any comments received, those comments, EPA's responses, and this FNSI will be forwarded to the Regional Administrator for review and signature. If the Regional Administrator signs this FNSI, it will not be recirculated for review but will be available to any individual upon request.

FINDING

After review of the EA and any comments received, EPA has determined that the proposed project will not have a significant impact on the environment and that an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared for this project.

Laura Yoshii
Acting Regional Administrator

Date

** The environmental assessment identifies six colonias outside the Douglas City limits (Fairview, Pirtleville, Bay Acres, Douglas Terrace, Sunnyside, Musgrave). Based upon subsequent information, three of the colonias (Douglas Terrace, Sunnyside, and Musgrave) have been annexed and are within the City of Douglas. The project outcome is not altered, however, as these residents remain within the total project area.*